AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph of lines 21 to 29 on page 7 as follows:

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the depiction of reputation information 50 in Figure 3 is intended to be merely illustrative and not limiting of the present invention. Reputation information 50 need not include the fields depicted in Figure 3. In some instances, a subset of the information depicted in Figure 3 may be maintained. In other instances, a superset that includes the information depicted in Figure 3 may be maintained. In still other instances, the reputation information may be entirely different from the exemplary varieties depicted in Figure 3. In general, the reputation information maintained by the illustrative embodiment may vary depending upon the application(s) that requires reputation information.

Please amend the paragraph of lines 4 to 25 on page 11 as follows:

In order for the reputation information provided by the reputation service to retain value, the reputation information must be kept current. As such, the illustrative embodiment provides a facility for updating the information. Figure 10 is a flowchart illustrating the steps that are performed to update reputation information. Initially, the reputation service 10 receives new information affecting the reputation of a party (Step 270 in Figure 10). In some instances, there may be a need to validate ~~that~~ the information. One can envision instances where a party might provide erroneous information to either bolster or harm the reputation of a party. If the information is deemed to be valid, an algorithm may be applied to calculate how the new information effects the reputation of the party (step 272 in Figure 10). One example of such an algorithm applies in the case where numerical values are assigned to a reputation (such as the 1-10 scale discussed in the example of Figure 4B). In such a case, the new information provides a basis for calculating a numeric value for the reputation for the instance represented by the new information. The new information may then be added to the other data points representing other instances to calculate a new mean value that represents the reputation for the party. For example, suppose that the reputation service has data for the reputation of a party from three previous instances. In the three previous instances, the party was assigned reputation values of 5, 6 and 7. The reputation value is 6, representing the mean of the collected values. Suppose that new information for a fourth instance is received that assigns the party a reputation value of 10. The 10 value is added to the other values to produce a sum value of 28 (i.e., 5+6+7+10). The sum (28) is divided by the number of samples (i.e., 4) to produce a mean value of 7.